



APPROVED

MINUTES OF THE Special Meeting of the Edina Transportation Commission Thursday, October 6, 2005 Edina City Hall 4801 West 50th Street Community Room

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Les Wanninger, Jean White, Warren Plante, Joni Kelly Bennett, Geoffrey Workinger

MEMBERS ABSENT:

Marie Thorpe, Dean Dovolis

STAFF PRESENT:

Steve Lillehaug, Wayne Houle, Rebecca Foster

I. Call to Order

Lillehaug called the meeting to order. He announced that the first order of business was to nominate a chair. Plante nominated Wanninger as the chair. Bennett nominated herself. Lillehaug suggested nominating a chair and an alternate. Wanninger received four votes; Bennett one vote. Wanninger was named the chair. Lillehaug turned the meeting over to Wanninger. Workinger nominated Bennett to be alternate chair. All voted in favor of Bennett.

II. New Business

a. Northeast Edina Transportation Study Proposal Recommendation

Lillehaug said ten consulting firms were solicited, but only two proposals were received. The general consensus for not submitting a proposal is that it was not the right fit and/or not competitive. Lillehaug said the two proposals received are from firms that are capable of performing the stated objectives. Lillehaug said staff is recommending that the ETC approve the proposal prepared by SRF Consulting Group and recommends formalizing a contract for their services. The recommendation is based on the overall score from a 5-member staff review committee. Each firm was given an opportunity to present their proposal to the ETC.

SRF Consulting Group, Inc.: Representing SRF were Marie Cote, Principal and Project Manager of the proposed traffic study; Cote will oversee the technical analysis and evaluation process; and Beth Bartz, Principal for SRF's Environmental Group will be in charge of the facilitation process. Cote acknowledged that the project is challenging, however, they've developed an approach that will address the issues; work closely with city staff; create a process that will be fair and allow for informed decision-making; conduct sound technical analysis to identify existing conditions and problems; conduct an evaluation of all transportation alternatives and identify impacts versus benefits. A team of staff experienced in working with diverse stakeholders to find solutions to complex issues has been assembled to conduct the proposed traffic study.

Open Discussion:

Bennett stated that she is concerned with the lack of direct public involvement in the past studies conducted by SRF in the Country Club Neighborhood; the methodology and site proposed; and that they are attempting a third try and *unlikely* to have different results using the approach outlined. In response to Bennett's concerns Cote said they intend to look at solutions that would allow traffic to flow better on W. 44th Street, not creating more traffic and the difference with this traffic study is that they will meet with the Study Advisory Committee (SAC) to first look at existing data and collectively identify how to move forward. Bennett is concerned that the SAC may not allow broad public involvement as outlined in the ETC's policy. Bartz said they typically work with the agency's public involvement policy but would recommend against breaking up into neighborhood meetings.

Warren noted that since Edina is centrally located it is important to involve surrounding stakeholders. Stakeholders would be Hennepin County, Mn/DOT, City of Minneapolis and City of St. Louis Park and the SAC will include them as needed.

White asked how will the study cover multi-modal transportation? Cote said they have a transportation group in-house and they will rely on their expertise. In terms of projection, they do have the Met Council's projection but some people may not want to project this far out so this will need to be discussed.

What techniques will be used to stay within budget, asked Workinger? Cote said it was a challenge to develop the project scope given the budget and if they find it necessary to go outside of the proposed scope, they will make some recommendations such as one consultant attending an extra meeting if needed to keep cost down, etc.

Howard R. Green Company: Representing Howard R. Green Company were Steve Manhart and JoNette Kuhnau. Steve Manhart handed out a sample newsletter that would communicate to the residents in the various neighborhoods what they are doing. Manhart said they see the project as being both regional and local based on traffic counts and observation of the traffic patterns in the neighborhoods. He said they would work together to develop strategies to return local streets to what their functional classification is. Congestion on the regional system (Hwy. 100, 35W and Hwy. 169, etc.) is creating traffic on the local streets so they'll need to identify alternatives, said Manhart.

Manhart said they support the idea of a Northeast Edina Neighborhood Advisory Committee that would be made up of residents from the impacted neighborhoods and this group would be established early in the process through an open house so that the residents can identify what the issues are. And working through the ETC Policy, Manhart said his team would identify what may or may not work and make recommendations to the ETC and create pilot programs.

Open Discussion:

Bennett asked what involvement has the public had in issues that have been worked on in Minneapolis in neighborhoods of similar size of proposed project. Kuhnau said the neighborhoods are fairly organized with paid staff that keeps in touch with the residents and if needed they do plan public meetings.

Workinger asked how could they do so much work for so little money. Manhart said by providing a balanced staff. Workinger asked Manhart to reiterate his commitment to the public process. Manhart said they are committed to serving the City and residents to finding solutions.

White noted that they've included issue intersections such as Vernon and Interlachen that are outside of the northeast quadrant and asked how do they plan to draw cut-through traffic away from the neighborhoods and back onto the regional roads. Manhart said they would need to look at the overall system and identify ways to make improvements, keeping in mind funding issues and probably a 7-8 year process.

Regarding the public process, White asked at what point would they stop taking comments from the public and allow a smaller group to make decisions. Manhart said the meeting would have to be well advertised and the comment period would be closed by the end of the year.

Warren asked what types of recommendation have they made to deal with cut-through traffic and what types of improvements were implemented as a result. Kuhnau said there are many ways to make a street less appealing to cut-through traffic, from cutting off the street completely (most controversial), to narrowing the street, moving parking, etc. and improving streets that you want drivers to use.

Bennett asked if they have experience working with multiple neighborhoods where there are differences in interest. Kuhnau said in situations like this it is inevitable that not everyone is going to be happy, however, everyone should be given a chance to voice their concerns, kept informed throughout the process and try to incorporate their concerns.

Wanninger wrapped up the interview process by stating that it will be incumbent on the ETC to manage the scope of the project to stay within the defined area, as well as the timeline. He also said public relations campaign and attitude, along with the project is key to changing drivers' behavior.

Final Open Discussion

Wanninger said where public involvement is concerned, SRF would be using representative democracy while Howard R. Green would use a full democracy approach. Bennett said the full democracy approach fits well with the *NTMP*, which begins with identifying the problems and only listening to the residents can do this. She is concerned that the other neighborhoods that are finally invited to the table will not get a chance to voice their concerns. Plante is concerned that a public process of this scope may not be managed well based on past experiences where people were allowed to carry on without time limits.

A lengthy discussion ensued surrounding how to involve the public: representative vs. full democracy and how to move forward knowing the past history of the Country Club's attempts to make street changes that would affect surrounding neighborhoods without their participation.

Staff was asked to comment on the presentation from both consultants. Lillehaug recommended that the ETC look more closely at the team and not so much at their methodology because they will both use industry standards and in other areas it will be up to the ETC and staff to instruct them, for example, whether or not to hold public meetings and how many, etc. Lillehaug explained that staff recommended SRF because their experience includes working on entire neighborhoods whereas Howard R. Green's experience is more intersections or single streets.

Worker *pointed out the value* of not splitting and pitting neighborhoods against each other and also the need for public involvement. He is concerned in looking at SRF's proposal that

they've honed in on one specific neighborhood and if this is going to be the Edina Country Club Neighborhood Traffic Study it should be called just that. He said while SRF appears to have the talent, they do not seem to have the same understanding of what is being suggested as important components by Bennett and Plante. Wanninger said this is an Edina northeast study being led by the ETC, not the consulting firm or a specific neighborhood and this must be clearly communicated to all involved.

Plante motioned that they select SRF to conduct the Northeast Edina Transportation Study. The motion was seconded by Workinger.

Ayes: 3 (Wanninger, Plante, White)

Nays: 2 (Bennett, Workinger)

Workinger would like the record to reflect that he voted against SRF because they haven't demonstrated that they are doing anything except the Country Club Neighborhood. He believes they have the capacity to perform, but he is not convinced they understand the scope of the project based on their map.

Where the Advisory Committee is concerned Wanninger recommended including representation from the three business districts as well as City of Minneapolis and Hennepin County. Bennett asked where does an Advisory Committee fit into the policy that they've adopted and supplants public input as outlined in the policy. White said this committee could give an outside view and Houle said advisory committees are being used more often and they serve as a conduit to transfer information. Bennett is still concerned that the ETC policy that was developed as 'their' framework is not being followed. Wanninger asked for suggestions as to how to get neighborhood representation. Bennett said if they are going to ignore the policy she would suggest that they set up a commission that would include the business districts and different communities and other interests and not have quasi-representation that may or may not truly represent the public and in January have a true public meeting as prescribed in the policy.

The consensus is to send a formal invitation to each neighborhood organization, adjacent communities, the business districts and other groups of interest inviting them to participate in the process.

III. Approval of Minutes

a. September 15, 2005

Page 1, last paragraph: delete "...that works..." and substitute it with "...working in..."

Correction on page 3, Item VI – change 'stripping' to striping.

A motion was made by Plante to approve the minutes with above changes. The motion was seconded by Bennett.

IV. Open Discussion

Wanninger said he would like to have as an ongoing agenda item a summary report from Workinger on projects that the Planning Commission is working on as they relate to the ETC. He also suggested that they use the 5-minute speaking limit that Council has as a policy when the ETC holds public meetings.

Sharetheroadmndot.org – White said this is a new website for cyclists and motorists; she encouraged Commissioners visit the site.

Meeting adjourned.

The next regular meeting is scheduled for October 20, 2005, 6:00-8:00 p.m.